



Evaluating Benin EFL Learners Writing Composition during Final Exam: A Comparative Study



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Abstract

Evaluating EFL learners in Benin, specifically, the case of the upper-sixth grade requires a certain number of competencies. Writing is not an easy task for learners particularly when they do not have the appropriate vocabulary. The present article aims at analyzing the way students' papers were corrected; attention was focused on learners of the upper sixth grade during the school year and their final exam period. The researcher establishes a comparison between the two types of correcting learners 'writing, how students' were evaluated, and how feedback was turned in class. The evaluation took into account the writing composition only more specifically how EFL teachers evaluate learners for the final exam, how did it occur in class during the year and the conditions of these types of evaluation. A total number of 59 EFL teachers took part in this study. Among them, 50 EFL teachers were involved regarding the national exam and 09 other EFL teachers participated in this study in their classroom and out of exam context. The findings of this research indicate that there is a significant difference between the way the correction is undertaken in class and during the final. The results will then enable curriculum specialists in Benin to reexamine the concept of evaluation and more importantly the feedback on writing in class, and specifically for the national exam.

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1. Introduction

Writing is one of the most challenging tasks for foreign language learners. Learning to write well in a foreign language is usually considered more difficult than learning to read, speak, or understand the language. That assumption is reinforced by Benin EFL teachers, pedagogical advisors, and secondary schools inspectors who also recognize that writing is more difficult when one considers the other three skills: listening, speaking, and reading. In fact, learning to write is not an easy task for Benin upper-sixth grade students. The production skill is

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demanding and requires a great effort from students and hands-on from teachers. In Benin educational system, it's a great privilege for teachers to attend the national correction and to take part of it each year.

Unfortunately, all teachers are not qualified to participate in all tasks. Criteria are pre-established for good selection. For example, if a teacher is scheduled for the first part of evaluating papers, then it is probable for him/her to be expelled from the second part: the oral examination. Controllers or supervisors are systematically qualified to take part in the deliberation and if need, in the oral part.

The A-Level taken certificate obtained by the upper-sixth grade learners is considered to be the first condition to be enrolled in a program at the university. The teacher's accountability is crucial in decision making. Correcting the writing composition supposes that the teacher is used to that type of exercise in class. It should normally be considered as a routine. Correcting writing composition requires that the teacher is concentrated, be equipped, possess a strong background on how to evaluate grammatical and syntax errors.

The present paper explores the conditions under which the activity of checking and correcting the exam paper of students occurs, how the exam is organized, and its impacts on learner's achievement and success.

The present research study aims at:

- a) Finding adequate solutions to overcome Benin EFL teachers' difficulties while evaluating learners' papers at the end of the year.
- b) Proposing measures that may help decisions makers to train EFL teachers in evaluating learners both in class and at the end of the year.

In order to reach these objectives, this research paper attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1) How do Benin EFL teachers evaluate writing in class and during the exam?
- 2) Are all Benin EFL teachers selected for the national exam qualified?
- 3) What are the impacts of teachers' correction on learners' results?

The next section deals with the theoretical framework and the literature review.

2. Research Methods

Data Collection and procedures

An overall of sixty EFL teachers (50) and twelve (12) supervisors/controllers were involved in this research study. The setting of correction is in the district of Ouémé-Plateau specifically in Lycée Toffa 1er (Porto-Novo) Benin, a West Africa country. The EFL teachers came from varied background. The correction occurred each year in July at the national level. EFL teachers' schools are located in the department. The teachers were selected according to the dispatching made by the main supervisor with their corresponding controller. Each controller manages five correctors. The arrangement was made to distribute a questionnaire to all EFL teachers under their controller. An interview sheet was set up and turned to all the controllers. The questionnaire was composed of twelve questions. Five questions were established regarding the interview.

A follow-up study was conceived to cross-check the results obtained from the questionnaire and the interviews five months later in November and in January. The instrument used here was class observation. Nine EFL teachers were observed in their respective classes two times. The first period of the class visit was in December after the summative evaluation. The second period was in February after the second evaluation. Attention was focused on the feedback. Learners' papers were collected for deep analysis. The researcher made an appointment to visit nine other EFL teachers in their respective schools in order to evaluate their teaching practice in writing through learning situations, how they evaluate and provide feedback. The data were analyzed and compared to the way EFL teachers correct papers at the end of the year and pedagogical implications were established. The book Used was entitled "Go For English Terminale."

Table 1
Number of Schools, Classes, and Teachers Involved for Class Observation

Schools	Classes Observed	Learning Situation 1 and 2	Number of Teachers
School 1	Upper Sixth Grade A and C	The World's A Family	2
School 2	Upper Sixth Grade D and A	The World's A Family	2
	Upper Sixth Grade B	The World's A Family	1

School 3			
School 4	Upper Sixth Grade C and D	Lifestyle and Health	2
School 5	Upper Sixth Grade B and A	Lifestyle and Health	2
Total	<i>Upper Sixth grade</i> ABCD	LS 1 and 2	09

Theoretical framework and Literature Review

Writing is one of the fundamental ways people express themselves, share knowledge and reveal their position on important issues. It is not rare to hear expressions such as: “I don’t know how to write,” “I am not good at writing activities.” All these show how complex this language skill is. That complexity in writing is acknowledged by R. T. Kellogg (2008:1) who asserts: “*The novice writer progress from a stage of knowledge-telling to a stage of a knowledge-transforming characteristic of adult’s writer.*”

Little is also known about the impact of teachers’ feedback on students writing a composition in Benin. There is not much research available to show the importance of marking students’ papers especially for an upper sixth grade during their final in Benin.

Some researchers have tried to provide a broad definition of the term writing. Writing can simply be defined as a group of closely related sentences that develop a central idea. Writing according to Nunan, (2003) can be defined as a physical and mental activity. It is about discovering ideas, thinking about how to communicate, develop them into statements and paragraphs that will be comprehensible to a reader. It also has a dual purpose it expresses and impresses. This is why Boughey (1997) contends that:

Writing can also be viewed as a tool for the creation of ideas and the consolidation of the linguistic system by using it for communicative objectives in an interactive way. From this perspective, writing implies the successful transmission of ideas from an addresser to an addressee via text, and this exchange of information becomes a powerful means to motivate and encourage the development of language skills. (C. Boughey, 1977).

In addition, a distinction should be made between reflexive writing an extensive one. Reflexive writing is that type of writing for which you choose the subject and the form. Often, reflexive writing is written for the writer alone and not shared with an outside audience. Extensive writing, on the other hand, is writing for which you are given a subject or a range of subjects. Writing extensively results in most of the time in sharing your writing.

Regarding strategies, there are effective techniques that may involve learners into the writing task. Among those techniques, we may cite extensive reading. For Herder (2009: 17) “*Having the learners write as much as possible while paying little attention to form or accuracy is a wonderful strategy to construct writing fluency.*” In the same way, encouraging learners to use diaries and journals may also be possibilities for them to reinforce extensive writing.

Some years ago, the writing was taught differently. For example, in one class writing were collected and evaluated. In the next session class, students received their feedback. Murray was against this type of technique and declared that it was ineffective. For him, the wonderful time to learn about writing is while you are writing, then the teacher should assist and provide help in the process, but not in the product. He summarizes the process of writing into three main stages: the pre-writing stage, the writing itself, and the post-writing stage.

Some curriculum designers have proposed that encouragement of student participation in the exercise of writing requires a certain pragmatic approach. For instance, the teacher should be clear on what skills he/she is trying to develop. Next, he needs to decide on which means or type of exercise can facilitate learning of the target area. Later on, he can proceed to focus on what topic can be employed to ensure students ‘participation

Kroll (2001) also summarizes some of the key points for a teacher while planning a lesson on writing. She strengthens the use of “process approach” as being the main important element in teaching writing in the majority of classrooms nowadays. The approach considers writing as a cycle, with different steps of drafting, feedback on the draft, editing, and re-writing. The process approach also focuses on the writer, the creativity as a whole, starting from the generation of ideas through to the edition of work.

In process writing approaches, students learn that writing involves thinking, reflection, and multiple revisions. Teachers model the writing process by thinking aloud about their ideas, jotting them down, organizing them, developing a draft, reading it aloud, making a revision, asking students for their comments, and continuing to make more revisions. The classroom becomes a writing workshop in which students learn the craft of writing through discussion, sharing, and conferencing. Overall, the process approach help students develop both confidence and increase skill in their writing.

Dealing with the way of teaching writing, many scholars have raised the problem and insisted that the way is completely different when it comes to teaching writing to learners who have English as a second language. [Raimes \(1985:250\)](#) reacted in these words:

We should neither use the same pedagogical strategies for EFL students
In writing classes as for native speakers nor should we treat our students
Simply as learners who need large doses of language instruction.

Many other researchers mentioned another approach known as the genre approach. According to [Muncie \(2002:19\)](#). “*The Genre approach focuses more on the reader and on the conventions that a piece of writing needs to follow in order to be successfully accepted by its readership.*” They have pointed out that this approach recognizes that writing takes place in a social situation and reflects a particular purpose and that learning is possible through imitation and analysis, which facilitates explicit instruction. To make it possible, the teacher should follow three important steps:

- a) The target genre is modeled for the learners
- b) A text is jointly constructed by the teachers and the learners.
- c) A text is independently constructed by each learner.

Providing feedback for learners is another issue in writing. It is a very useful technique. Students often learn more from the individual exchange than when trying to decipher the teacher’s written suggestions on their own (Kroll, 2001). When the teacher corrects a student’s writing, the temptation is often to correct all errors to create a perfect piece of writing. There is a controversy between authors on the way EFL teachers should provide feedback. One way of doing it is through direct feedback. With that technique, the teacher identifies an error and corrects it for the student, providing an example of the proper form. With the indirect feedback, the instructor points out that an error has been made but does not correct it. The students must identify and correct the error themselves.

[Ferris \(2002\)](#) noticed that direct feedback on errors led to more correct revisions than indirect feedback. [Frodesen \(2001\)](#) pointed out that indirect feedback is more beneficial than direct correction. Written feedback has proved to be useful when it is combined with learner-teacher conferencing. ([Brender,1998; Fregeau 1999](#)).

Coded Feedback is another possibility that may help learners to be aware of their errors. It is a combination of direct and indirect feedback. With the uncoded feedback, on the other hand, the teacher indicated an error has been made but does not correct the error. The student must diagnose the type of error and correct it.

Some research indicates that learners prefer to receive feedback from their teachers rather than peers ([Zhang 1995:1](#)) [Carnells 2000](#) research indicates the contrary. In fact, a recent study investigated the effects of aspects of good writing strategy instruction. Another important strategy as a guideline to teach effective writing is **scaffolding**. Scaffolding is one of the good strategy instruction, and it can be defined as the assistance that allows students to complete tasks they cannot complete independently. ([Wood, Bruner, and Ross, 1976](#)).

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 Feedback from the questionnaire

The results from the questionnaire were summarized in table 2 below.

Table 2
Results from EFL Questionnaire

Questions	Statements	Yes	No	If No/Reasons
1 and 2	First time to attend the national	12		1 to 5.....19

	correction?			5to 10.....26 More than 10.....05
3	Called by the supervisor to reconsider the mark	50	00	
4	Reasons: mark under the normal	07	00	
	mark too high	31		
	mark fair	06		
	Other	06		
5	Always observe the criteria and indicators while correcting	50	00	
6	Read the intro, the body, and the conclusion effectively	50	00	
7	Impact of time while evaluating	50		
8 and 9	Satisfaction about the remarks of their supervisor	17	33	Reasons for blaming the supervisor : Demanding.....11 - Selfish and talkative... 07 - arguments not useful...15
10 and 11	Appreciation of the supervisor	13	37	- wasting time for explanation.....13 - never present.....06 - too slow18
12	Pride to participate	50	00	

From the above table 2, it can be noticed that 12 over 50 teachers have confessed that it was their first time to attend the national correction. This means that each year, there is a promotion for EFL teachers.

Nineteen EFL teachers agreed that the year of their participation ranges from 1 to 5; Twenty-six from 5 to 10; and finally five teachers agreed that the year of participation is comprised between ten and more. All the EFL teachers involved in this research agreed that they had been called by the supervisor to reconsider their mark since they have been teaching.

Seven EFL teachers honestly noticed that they provided the mark that is under the good one. Thirty one recognize that the mark was too high; six confessed that sometimes they need to re-calculate the means or they left some items without correction. Correcting item 2 for upper sixth grade requires more attention and concentration. They must read the text thoroughly. The number of EFL teachers from whom the mark was too high is remarkable. This shows that there is a mismatch between what they suppose to mark and their perception. For instance, for a yes or No question added to justification, a prospective teacher must not invalidate the entire mark if it counts for three marks. At least half mark should be given and the instructor ought to forget about the justification part.

Supervisors complain that learners copy and paste information from the text as if they were the owner of the ideas. They construct the paragraphs, and it is up to the teacher to make sure that the ideas are original.

The next part displays the feedback data from EFL interview.

3.2 Feedback from EFL interview

During our investigation, we met the supervisors/controllers. The main objective was to seize the opportunity of the final exam to exchange on the difficulties they face during the supervision of EFL teachers while marking learners' written production.

1. All Benin EFL teachers are not good at providing good feedback. Inexperienced teachers have difficulties in marking candidates' papers. Supervisors turned that they are more comfortable when it happens to work with three veteran teachers or correctors over the regular five they receive. This reduces the time to repeat or re-precise the same instruction. Moreover, supervisors mentioned that they had a hard time when they felt that they should re-read the whole essay to modify the global mark.
2. The common errors can be summarized as followed:

- a) Grammatical errors
 - b) Syntactic errors
 - c) Leaving paragraphs without marking them
 - d) Leaving a whole page without a real reading
 - e) Not considering strong ideas/arguments in favor of the topic
 - f) Minimizing the vocabularies used because of the candidate copy and paste words from the original text.
3. Supervisors manage the situation the best they can. Sometimes they are obliged to let the coordinator know about the issue when it is unacceptable. Other times, they provide advice and fix the issue. Three(03) supervisors out 12 turned that they were obliged to ask for help, they simply demanded to shift their correctors because the way they mark students' papers does not reflect the content of candidate's production. There was a great mark gap between the mark and the essay composition.
 4. The collaboration is systematic because of the incentive at the end of the working session. However, supervisors do know that it is not a frank collaboration. Inexperienced EFL teachers collaborate. They are available and would like to learn more. EFL teachers who used to attend the correction never care about the supervisor's remarks.
They do understand because of the pressure. Sometimes, there are EFL teachers who show up the second day of correction and instruction is directed to accept them
 5. Supervisors suggest that EFL teachers should be held responsible for their role while marking learners' papers. Pre-sessions should be organized before the due date of corrections so that inexperienced one be aware of how to mark composition writing. Furthermore, they suggested that some of EFL be expelled from the team of correctors if errors occurred repeatedly.
The next section will highlight deeply what the researcher has observed in the classes.

3.3 Data from Classroom Observations

In class, the principle of writing and evaluation are totally different. The learners are not taught this skill. Attention was focused on accuracy, especially rephrasing. Students need vocabulary to translate their idea into meaningful paragraphs. With EFL teaching practice interaction and assistance were not provided regarding building sentences, working on the choice of words, constructing simple and accurate sentences. Learners' copy books and papers were collected for the first term evaluation in November and in January for the second term. The researcher went through the note-taking and the marking papers.

The result of the analysis of the copybooks reveals that the rubric of writing was empty for six (6) EFL teachers. The same rubric was well furnished for the other three veteran teachers. The note-taking demonstrates that there are hands on the practice of writing. In two classes A (Literature series) and C (Scientific series), learners spent an hour each Friday and Wednesday on a topic related to the current learning situation. Assistance was provided to check if all of the students were giving a try.

Roughly speaking from the nine (09) teachers observed, only three have really succeeded in teaching the technique of writing and provided effective feedback. Feedback was not provided when it comes to correct the complete evaluation. The teacher stops the correction of the papers with the item 5 that is the translation. Concrete propositions are not made for the learners to understand the ideas for the writing section. Learners were criticized for they lack an adequate vocabulary to convey meaning. A teacher complained for an hour because of learners' level. She had spent all the time providing advice on reading. Evaluation should occur only if the content or if what is taught can be evaluated. Sometimes learners only work three times, that is for 9 hours, and they are scheduled for the test.

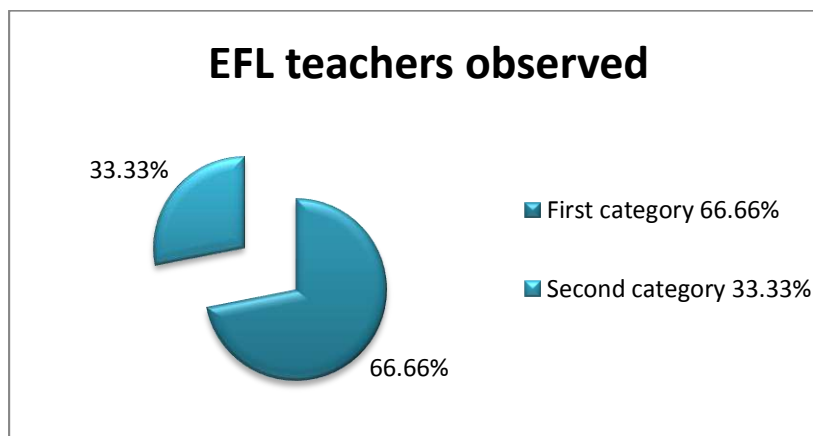


Figure 1: Frequency of EFL teachers observed

From the previous analyses, teachers do not consider the social environment of learners in the selection of their topic. It is crucial that they take into account that variable. For example, for the intermediate level, in the “document d’accompagnement” of form 2 (5ème), it will be impossible for Benin learners living in the lacustrine villages of Aguégues to describe a race competition. Also, the significant difference between marking and providing feedback in class and during the exam is due to the lack of teachers’ training. That idea is confirmed by Harris (1977: 175) in his reports: “Some teachers do not teach composition at the school level.” Other researchers reinforce the same idea. They indicate that “there are fewer writing activities done in schools and student writing is most of the time underestimated.” (Wingate 2006; Cohen and Riel 1989).

From the analysis of classroom observation, the researcher concludes that the time factor plays an important role in training learners on the writing skills. The more learners practice, the more they will acquire skills on how to deal with composition, essay writing during their final. A great number of students leave the composition blank just because they have no idea of what they are going to write. In addition, the appropriate vocabulary does not exist so that they construct coherent sentences. This is also a common situation during their final.

Vocabulary was not taught appropriately. For each learning situation learners should possess a package of words that will help them construct meaningful sentences. The main issue was that vocabulary was not in context. Dealing with teaching vocabulary in context, Nation (1982: 23-28) argued that:

Every attempt must be made to ensure that the learning is being carried out in a way that makes use of the context; otherwise, words in context could be learned as if they were in the list. Learners should be given guidance and practice in the techniques of guessing from the context because this will be valuable both in learning new words and in establishing words already studied in lists.

The feedback in Writing requires more time, and it’s time consuming due to students ‘level. The EFL teacher should be patient enough to correct learners ‘error. The way correction was tackled is questionable. Veteran EFL teachers should train younger one on how to go through a gentle correction. Gentle correction is important because it makes learners feel more confident. It leads learners to feel more responsible and be aware of their errors. Sometimes critics especially when they are of nature to be constructive constitute elements of motivation. There is no need to shout on learners, to minimize their potential and discourage them. Non-constructive suggestions lower student’s self-confidence. The question EFL teachers should ask is regarding what to do so that those students regain assurance and how may the teacher provides help, so that the students acquire or get hands-on writing a good composition. EFL teachers should not play on learners’ emotion. Yelling at adolescents may be qualified as emotional abuse; this may lead to low self-esteem, anxiety leads to fear, lack of participation, not determined. An effective teacher should follow some techniques and strategies to involve learners into a writing task in his or her classes.

To reach their goal, first of all teachers should choose the writing objective. Next, they should find a writing exercise that helps to focus on the specific objective. If need be, teachers should tie the subject matter to student needs. Another important area is that they provide feedback through correction activities that call on students to

correct their own mistakes. Finally, teachers make students revise the task or the work given. Before all these, teachers should learn on how to choose their target. Choosing the target area depends on many factors. Questions such as the level are the students; the average of the students are important. Other important questions to ask oneself are to know what the students will produce at the end of the writing task.

Once these factors are clear in the mind of the teacher, he can begin to focus on how to involve the students in the activity thus promoting a positive, long-term learning experience. In order to keep students involved teachers can select a good or an interesting topic. Next, they may provide a context within which effective learning on the target area can be undertaken. In addition to that, the teacher should make writing interactive. This requires imagination on the part of the teacher, but the creativity and enthusiasm reward that imagination that most students display in response. The teacher may provide scaffolding approach (kind of assistance the teacher provides to help students while performing a task. It is an effective approach but not well known by some teachers. In fact, scaffolding helps learners move independently. An instructional scaffolding provides support to the learner. For example, in learning to walk, the father provides the first tentative steps to his daughter. In the same way, in classrooms, teachers provide scaffolding by breaking content into manageable pieces, modeling skills, providing practice and examples with prompts, and letting go when the student is ready.

Finally, it is important that the teacher sharpens students' critical thinking and encourage them to use easy words. From the research questions, the researcher concludes that the way Benin EFL teachers evaluate writing in class is less demanding than their practice during the exam period. In class the majority of teachers visited did not focus attention on the use of writing code. Papers were marked without using a red pen on a single line. Paragraphs were not checked to understand if the content of the ideas fit the topic. Marks were applied without criteria to determine if the student deserves more or less. (See Appendix D) Papers are not turned back at the right moment. Some classes may receive their papers on Thursday and the coming Tuesday a new evaluation (a summative one) is already scheduled. In these conditions, learners will never discover their errors.

The researcher suggestions for that issue are to train students on the technique of writing in class. The concept of scaffolding is important here. Learners should be assisted on the writing practice. Teachers may devote an hour and select a day during the week to make learners practice. EFL teachers through their marking should teach the symbol of marking. This may be personal. For the final exam, EFL teachers focus more seriously on the process of students' written composition production marking (See Appendix page C). This is due to the threat of the main supervisor. If they fail, they may be replaced systematically and dismiss from the list of correctors for years. However, despite those measures, there is a gap between the mark attributed and what the learner deserves.

Overall, Benin EFL teachers selected are not qualified to participate. Pressures sometimes come from the supreme authorities, and acceptance was made to let some EFL teachers who are not qualified at all to be part of the exam. The researcher suggests a proposed sample of correction of students' papers for written composition. It may occur during a plenary session for each category/ series or (field ABCD G1G2) so that the beginner learns a little bit what to insert exactly on the papers. The administrator may reexamine the issue of charge. Each supervisor/controller per group should work with only an inexperienced teacher.

The impact of EFL bad marking on learners' papers is that parents complain a lot and the statistical score received from the Baccalaureate office in 2016 from the complaints especially in English showed that EFL teachers should pay more attention to what they have been doing. During deliberation, the researcher has also discovered that the composition part is not well corrected. Items are left completely, and a re-correction was compulsory.

4. Conclusion

Learning to write requires that one understands the task requirements as well as the discourse knowledge. In the planning stage, writers generate and organize ideas. During translation, they put ideas on paper, and in the final stage of revising; they correct errors, clarify ideas, and restructure the piece to make it more organized and cohesive.

Weigle (2002:35) noticed that:

“Because of the constraints of the limited second language knowledge, writing in a second language may be hampered because of the need to focus on language rather than content. It is impossible for L2 students to write in a target language properly without linguistic regarding grammar and vocabulary”.

This study explores the evaluation of the written composition of Benin EFL students. The results indicate that there is a significant difference between the way the correction is undertaken in class and during the final. The time factor is a remarkable constraint. EFL teachers rush to correct the maximum of copies because of the incentive ignoring that it may impact learners' mark negatively. In class, EFL teachers still need the training to teach writing so that it becomes a routine. In class, EFL teachers should make an effort to provide students with evaluative feedback.

The researcher comes up to the conclusion that school specialists should re-think the issue of selection of teachers at the national level. A strict selection is compulsory for all EFL teachers who should attend the national exam and criteria should be established for their participation. Supervisors are not going to work under pressure all the time by accepting unqualified EFL teachers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for EFL teachers

I am undertaking a research on a learners' writing composition in class and in the final exam: a case study of the upper sixth grade. For each item, Please check the description that applies to you.

Thank you

1. Is it the first time for you to attend the national correction?



Yes



No

2. If No, tick the appropriate box



1 to 5



5 to 10



More than ten years

3. Have you ever been called by your supervisor to reconsider your mark in writing?



Yes



No

4. If yes, tick the reasons



The mark was under



the mark was too high



the mark was fair



Others

5. Do you always observe the criteria and all the indicators while correcting



Yes



No

6. Do you read your students' production effectively? The introduction, the body, and the Conclusion



Yes



No

7. Do you think that time impact your way of evaluating students' writing?



Yes



No

8. Are you satisfied with your supervisor's remarks?










Yes



No

9. If No, what do you blame him/her for?



Too demanding	selfish and talkative	Arguments not useful
10. Do you appreciate your supervisor?		
		
Yes		No
11. If No, tick a reason		
		
Waste time explaining	Never present	too slow in checking
12. Are you proud of being part of grading students 'papers at the national exam level?		
		
Yes		No

APPENDIX B

Interview for Supervisors/Controllers

The following questions are designed by the researcher to understand analyze, and compare the way Benin EFL teachers evaluate learners' writing composition for their final exam: case study of upper sixth grade

1. Do all the EFL teachers under your supervision correct well?
2. What are the common errors?
3. How do you cope with them?
4. Do they collaborate?
5. What do you suggest to improve the situation?

APPENDIX C

The process of students 'written production marking in Benin according to the CBA programs. (Competency-Based Approach)

Here are the criteria:

1. The respect of the context and the type of text
2. Coherence
3. The construction of meaningful and grammatically correct sentences
4. The use of the vocabulary related to the topic

The use of appropriate spelling and punctuation

1. The respect of the context and the type of text requires from students the ability to be able to recognize the real issue the topic they are submitted is about. It may be one of the learning situations of their study curriculum or another one which has a close link with the text the students are dealing with.
2. The respect of the text is concerned with the different types of writing activities teachers went through with learners before the evaluation, for example, an argumentation, a formal letter, a speech, a newspaper, or an article.
3. Coherence has to do with the organization of sentences and paragraphs into a correct order that will help the reader to have a clear understanding of the written production. It also ensures the cohesion and unity of sentences and paragraphs.
4. The construction of meaningful and grammatically correct sentences calls for the syntactic competence of students; how they organize words and sentences to convey meanings. The way they use grammatical rules and structures, so as to produce grammatically correct sentences.

5. The use of the vocabulary related to the topic involves using lexical items related to the topic, words that show or demonstrate that they have the necessary background to present a well-written production included words or expressions necessary for a clear understanding of their production.
6. Regarding the use of appropriate spelling and punctuation, students are expected to show their ability to write correctly without mistake each word they are using in their writing; the rules of punctuation should do this.

APPENDIX D

Samples of composition corrected by two different EFL teachers.

A beginner teacher corrected the first composition. The symbols for marking are missing, and there are no criteria to judge the student's work. An experienced/veteran teacher corrected the second one.

